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Tennessee Universities Recruiting More Hispanics

According to the Associated Press (Sept 24, 2007), universities across the State of Tennessee are taking steps to recruit more Hispanics to diversify their student bodies. According to a recent study conducted by Excelencia in Education, a Washington-based Hispanic think tank, nearly half of Hispanic undergraduates attend about eight percent of universities in the United States. Further, the organization found that Hispanic undergraduates are concentrated in the country's universities where at least 25 percent of undergraduates are Hispanic. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* reported that no such institutions are in Tennessee.

Diverse Issues Online indicated that in order to remedy that, university officials in Tennessee at both private and public universities have hired Hispanic advisers, increased visibility in the Hispanic community and begun contacting prospective students earlier in their careers, even before they reach high school. The initiatives are welcome

news for students like Alejandra Gonzalez, who left her hometown of El Paso, Tex., for Vanderbilt University this fall. "It was a really big culture shock for me," says Gonzalez, a freshman human organizational development major. "I think that I knew there weren't going to be (many) Hispanics, but I didn't imagine there was going to be none."

Dr. Doug Christiansen, dean of admissions at Vanderbilt, says the school is increasing efforts to attract minority students, including Hispanics, as early as seventh grade to expand the pool of eligible students. The school works with students to ensure they stay on track with their grades and take necessary classes in high school to be eligible for admission. Vanderbilt saw its Hispanic undergraduate enrollment increased from 339 students last year to 362 this semester, officials say.

At Tennessee State University, recruiter Jose Vazquez arrived at the school about a year ago par-

tially to attract Hispanics, including adult nontraditional students. "I've been dealing with different Hispanic leaders out in the community, and they know that it is important for the Latino community here in Nashville to strive for education," Vazquez says.

Belmont University officials also have increased recruitment efforts in the Nashville Hispanic community through hosting events with the YMCA's Hispanic Achievers program, as well as an annual Latin street festival on campus. "For us, the long-range way of increasing our minority population is to reach out to the communities around us," says Belmont Provost Dan McAlexander.

At the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, officials are planning recruitment programs targeting Hispanics, including campus visits geared exclusively to Hispanics, spokeswoman Amy Blakely says. This year, UT's freshman class included 73 Hispanics, or 1.7 percent of the school's incoming class.

SEAP Applications Available

During the month of December 2007, visits were made to fourteen (14) high schools in the Huntsville-Madison County area and Decatur, Ala., to meet with high school counselors to recruit and promote the Science and Engineering Apprentice Program (SEAP) at

AMRDEC. Counselors made a sincere commitment to provide some of the best and brightest students to apply for the program.

The application deadline is January 31, 2008. Applications and supporting materials are available online at www.gwseap.net. Inquiries

may be sent to M. Phillips, SEAS-GW, Science and Engineering Apprentice Program, 1776 G Street, NW-LL, Room 171, Washington, DC 20052. Please share this information with fellow employees, school organizations, neighbors, and Family.

AMRDEC Supports Upcoming Conferences

The 2008 Black Engineer of the Year Award (BEYA) Conference is scheduled to be held February 14-16, 2008, in Baltimore, Maryland. This annual event attracts more than 3000 professionals and students throughout the United States in every field of science, engineering, and technology. It affords AMRDEC the opportunity to recruit some of America's best and brightest technical students via the Career Fair that RDECOM supports.

Staffing the booth from AMRDEC will be Cecily Palmer, Gayla McMichael, Joshua Clemons, and Abner Merriweather.

Similarly, AMRDEC personnel will staff a booth at the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) Conference on March 20-22, 2008, in Orlando, Florida. Top professionals and students in the discipline of science, engineering and technology come from around the world to engage with each other at this gathering. AMRDEC personnel will join RDECOM staff to talk with college students and individuals who might be interested in considering employment here.

SEAP Survey

A sneak preview of the responses from the SEAP Survey reveals that former apprentices in the Science and Engineering Program are pursuing undergraduate degrees in science and engineering and attending some of America's best colleges and universities, such as Stanford University.

Also, former high school apprentices tend to be taking additional courses in science and mathematics as a result of their participation in SEAP. Results of the survey should be available this spring.